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Wed Oct 19 11:20:44 1988

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Afghan rebels attack Kabul airport

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (UPI) — U.S.-backed Afghan rebels blasted Kabul airport with rockets Wednesday, killing at least 15 civilians, damaging buildings and forcing a closure of the facility, a Western diplomat said.

It was the third major attack on the airport in the past two months. The guerrillas rocketed the facility twice in one week in late August and early September, killing at least 14 people, injuring 38 and causing extensive damage.

Rebel shelling of Kabul and other major cities has increased since the May 15 start of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan under U.N.-mediated Geneva Accords. Western diplomats say the attacks are designed to demonstrate to civilians that the government can no longer protect them.

The diplomat Wednesday said guerrillas launched an intense barrage of rockets onto the airport at about 1 p.m. and that the attack continued through the afternoon. He quoted airport guards as saying between 15 to 25 rockets had landed in one hour alone.

The guards reported at least 15 civilians were killed in a building of the international terminal that received a direct hit, "although thus far no civilian aircraft have been damaged," the diplomat said.

He said the civilian airport area had been evacuated and Soviet jetfighters and attack helicopters were scrambled.

He gave no further details.

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Wed Oct 19 11:40:27 1988

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-AFGHANISTAN: 15 DEAD; KABUL AIRPORT CLOSED BY ROCKET ATTACK

Wed Oct 19 09:10:54 1988

BK1910124988 HONG KONG AFP IN ENGLISH 1246 GMT 19 OCT 88

[TEXT] ISLAMABAD, OCT 19 (AFP) -- KABUL AIRPORT WAS SHUT DOWN WEDNESDAY AMIDST A ROCKET ATTACK BY REBELS THAT LEFT 15 PEOPLE DEAD AND THE TERMINAL BUILDING DAMAGED, DIPLOMATIC SOURCES HERE SAID.

NO CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT WERE HIT AS 15 TO 25 ROCKETS FELL ON THE AIRPORT AT A RATE OF ONE EVERY FIVE TO 10 MINUTES, THE SOURCES SAID.

THE VICTIMS WERE INSIDE THE TERMINAL BUILDING WHEN ONE OF THE ROCKETS HIT, AS SEVERAL SOVIET-MADE WARPLANES INCLUDING TWO SU-25 FROGFOOT ATTACK JETS AND FOUR MI-24 HIND-D HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS WERE SCRAMBLED, THE SOURCES SAID.

ONE DIPLOMAT IN KABUL, WHO THE SOURCES DID NOT IDENTIFY, WAS TOLD UPON REACHING THE ENTRANCE TO KABUL AIRPORT THAT HE COULD NOT PROCEED FURTHER AS THE TERMINAL BUILDING HAD BEEN HIT.

HE WAS ALSO TOLD THAT THE "ENTIRE CIVILIAN AIRPORT AREA, INCLUDING THE CONTROL TOWER" HAD BEEN EVACUATED, THE SOURCES SAID.

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-AFGHAN-ROCKETS (SCHEDULED)

Wed Oct 19 10:58:21 1988

REBELS RAIN 60 ROCKETS ON KABUL, KILLING NINE, TASS SAYS
MOSCOW, Oct 19, Reuter - Moslem rebels bombarded the Afghan capital Kabul with around 60 ground-to-ground rockets for six hours on Wednesday, killing nine people, the Soviet news agency Tass said.

Two women and a child were among the dead, it said, quoting provisional data.

Two other people died in Kabul when a bomb went off in a city centre kiosk, Tass said.

Rebels fighting the Moscow-backed government also killed three people in rocket attacks on the cities of Jalalabad and Gardez on Tuesday, Tass said.

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